File: Overall — other

12/23/68

Dear Jack,

Many thanks for your letter of 12/20, the article and the check. What issue of the Journal? We have an escrow account for the unpublished books into which the check will go. I wish I thought it would be possible to bring them out soon. But, I do keep working.

After I spoke to you, unexpectedly I was in Dallas, as a guest. My short visit there was in many ways very successful. You can tell your friend I located and had a long and friendly taped talk with Father Machann. Only because I didn't get around to it in time did I not get to see Joann Rogers. She left the day I phoned her for six months in Florida but promised to tell a mutual friend how I could reach her. She'd see me there but I have no means of getting there. I phoned the friend today, but no one was home. Meanwhile, I have an invitation to go there for dinner during the holidays and I will.

I want to encourage you to try and understand that some of the extremely conservative people who are in no way connected with the assassination are on our side and have been very helpful. I really expect more help from them. I am satisfied in my own mind there is nothing sinister about the fact that Sylvia was with the Rogerses. By the way, I also interviewed her uncle two weeks ago. He confirms what I learned in Dallas, she has divorced the husband she remarried, is back in the U.S., in Florida, and has married another man. If your friend knows her new name and address, I'd like to have it in case I do get down there. I might. I never know. I didn't expect to go to Dallas after I saw you, but I did.

What you suggest sounds like basically a good approach if your friend is willing to take the time. I think the most important thing is not to color her recollection, not to feed her what she might consciously or subconsciously feed back. If she knows any of the men involved, and if Hal has any pictures, I think it important to include other pictures so the identification will not be automatic.

You know the story you told me. Get that on tape. Get her to add why they were with Sylvia, the dates, who asked them, why they expected what they did-had she forecast it, or had she said what led them to expect it. I am satisfied she anticipated the assassination. I am also satisfied the federal agents did not report everything she told them. I know some of what they left out, but not enough. I am satisfied they forced an identification of the men who visited her on her, including perhaps forcing her to specify names when she may not have been certain. Her best independent recollection is important. Also, the direction the FBI led her into, if your friend knows these things. Then there is the story of Machann, what embarrassed him, if she knows and will tell (she may be willing to put it in a letter to me but not tell more than one person). What does she know about Lucille Connell and what transpired at her house. Does she know the story of Sylvia and the pillow at the Rogerses, or of the letter from Connell, then in Boston, Sylvia left behind. If she knows these, I need details. Then there is the Ramos girl and her story, if she knows it. This is one of the several things involving Lieutenant Butler. Does she know or believe Sylvia told Machann things in the confessional? Does she know or conjecture what? Incidently, I suspect this. He told me he had confidences he could not divulge when I led him in this direction, and I respected it. If this is the case, he is the second Catholic priest with such a problem, in Dallas.

Does your friend understand, as I hope she does, that the only danger to her if she has important information is from silence? There is cause for those who might be hurt by that knowledge to do something if she has kept it to herself. If someone like me knows it, there is nothing to be gained by doing anything to her and, in fact, it is a kind of insurance, for it would tend to finger them. The same is

even more true of Sylvia. I think it is important that there be a record of what each could say. You can trust Hal implicitly. He will not breach confidences. I also will not use what should not be used. If he and I both have copies of the tape, it is even better.

Regardless of whether she agrees with the opinions I expressed to you, I hope you will get her to speak her own mind, not mine. These differences can be addressed in the future. The Warren Commission had no monopoly on error. I also can be wrong, though I try otherwise and here do not think I am. I think the involvement of Ferre was personal, and that of the Rogerses is through him, as a favor to him. Sylvia's affiliation was with the more leftward group, though it was not genuinely to the left. This is what makes more incredible the sending of those extreme rightists Hall and Howard to her. They were not the guys, as the FBI said, or there was something especially devious about this. Does your friend have any ideas along the line of who was there? Did Sylvia say anything not in the evidence about this? Did it have any connection with the DRE, which had people there about that approximate time, or a rally at White Rock Lake, at the same approximate time? I have the names, and Hal has them available to him from Paul, the young man with the beard who you met, of those at one of the DRE meetings. Does she think Ed Schwille had any involvement? He was a Texas Knott's Berry Farmer. Now dead. General Walker was at that DRE meeting. Does she know of any of these people who might have resembled Oswald (including from the names, for there was a report Oswald was at that meeting).

Did Sylvia ever mention any Cubans who worked at Parkland in a way to indicate she had any suspicions of any kind about them? There was one of whom Machann had doubts. I forgot to ask him about that man. I have a name and description of a possible candidate from the Castorrs.

Did Sylvia talk when she was out, or did she afterward say anything that might have significance, or anything that didn't make sense that we might be able to make sense of?

I've rambled, for it is past my late bedtime. I hope it is comprehensible. My thanks to you and your friend, and best wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous year.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg